

Voice Training with Freewriting

Expression through writing involves our own real, personal voice. In order to move from mundane aspects of everyday life towards higher aspects, I recommend freewriting, which will help you identify your ideas, share your feelings, and let your beliefs flow. Write without looking at the paper, and without stopping yourself to think if what you're saying is right. Open yourself, think creatively, get everything out, and value quantity over quality. Freewriting comes directly from your heart instead of being filtered through your head, and because of this, it will have a real aspect. It will be coherent and integrated because of the interaction of your voice with your life experiences. A wise man once said, "Writers set out in apparent ignorance of what they are groping for, yet they recognize it when they find it."

It requires some trust to let yourself go, but when you do, you can discover unchallenged, deep beliefs. Just like a fish doesn't know that it's in water, we don't normally think about our basic ways of being and treating others. It's these core values or ideals that guide your actions whether you think about them or not. Unconsidered beliefs sometimes pop up in negative ways, as myopic stereotypes, false superstitions, and foolish decisions. If you let these feelings out, you can recognize them and grow wiser. When you write from the heart, you can recognize the imagery and significance in your actual experiences, seeing the truth about your life that usually gets ignored. The heart knows far more than it ever says, once you allow it to be free. Writing is a medium for a change of heart, which we also call spiritual growth.

One specific way to freewrite is to start your word-processor and turn off the monitor. Then divide your writing time, say an hour, into four sessions. Write for 10-15 minutes solid, without pausing, and without pre-judging your content. Just let it flow – it will become clearer as you go on, just like water through a stream becomes cleaner as it flows. Don't stop until your time is up. Then take your best sentence and copy/paste it onto the next line. Repeat the process twice. For the fourth, last writing session, look over the entire amount of writing that you have produced. Find the idea that best represents the whole direction that you are going, which you have creatively discovered through your freewriting process. Then write for the last ten minutes about this idea. You will have found the center of concern regarding the matter that has emerged from your writing. That's your position. That's your voice.